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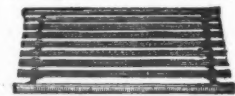
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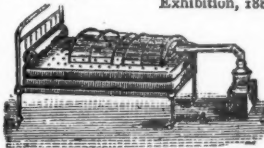
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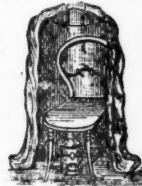
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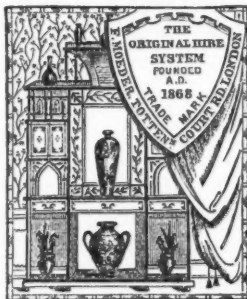
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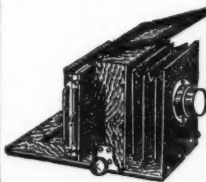
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## A STERN CHASE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

### THE THIRD PART.

#### CHAPTER IV. IN A FOOL'S PARADISE.

THE lapse of years had brought about no change in the relations between Liliás Merivale and Colonel and Mrs. Courtland. They were still her tenants at Lisle, but she was no longer a stranger there. Her life had been so completely altered; its loneliness, its vain regret, had been so entirely dispelled; by the revelation made to her by James Willesden, that she no longer shrank from the sight of the scenes amid which she had suffered the last, worst period of the suspense that remained in her memory of the past as that of its most trying experience. She visited her friends at Lisle frequently, and the romantic story of the little girl whose mother had died at the convalescent cottage, and who turned out to be Miss Merivale's niece—people were not particular to a shade about the real relationship—was one of the local anecdotes wherewith visitors to Great and Little Choughton were entertained for some years afterwards.

In the Little Choughton churchyard a cross of pure white marble marked the spot where "Fair Ines", alike untouched by—

— pleasure on the sea  
And sorrow on the shore,

slept well, and the inscription told that it had been erected in remembrance of Hugh Rosslyn, her husband, "lost at sea" seven years before she was laid in that foreign resting-place. A far-spreading ancient yew-tree, with a little hillock of green grass at its foot, stood near the flower-decked grave, and Liliás liked to sit under its

shade when she visited the churchyard with the little Dolores, reviewing the past, and thankful for the great relief that had come to her from the hand of a child. About the image of the dead woman, as she conjured it up, there hung a sad and solemn mystery; her sorrows, her fears, and her sufferings were altogether out of the ken of Liliás Merivale. In her own safe-guarded, commonplace life, the barest outline of the facts of that of Ines was all she had to guide her fancy, and she would endeavour to conjure up to her mind's eye from Mrs. Courtland's description of Mrs. Willesden a picture of the girl of whom Hugh had written so rapturously, tempered in its radiance, but not shorn of its beauty.

Dolores, she thought, must be very like her mother: probably not so brightly and sunnily beautiful, because she had not been born and reared in a land of the sun: the privations of her early childhood must also have made a difference in the child. Mrs. Courtland could point out in what particular she resembled the mother who had been so beautiful to the last, and as Dolores grew older would trace that resemblance with accurate recollection, for the visits of Liliás and her charge kept green the memory of the dead at Lisle. It did not surprise Liliás that no likeness to Hugh was to be traced in his daughter's face, because, though she would have given much to find resemblance there, she could expect none between the dark-eyed, dark-haired, olive-and-carnation-tinted daughter and the fair-haired, fair-complexioned, blue-eyed father, except in certain looks and turns of countenance, independent of form and feature.

Dolores, who was called "the little Spaniard" by the people about, had less of the subtle grace of her mother's race



than Fair Ines, and still showed the immaturity of early girlhood at the age when her mother's beauty had reached the perfection of its bloom. If Liliás looked in vain for a likeness to her father in Dolores, she was not more successful in tracing a moral and intellectual resemblance to Hugh. Dolores was keenly sensitive, indeed, but of an indolent turn of mind, and wholly without artistic tastes. Fair but not remarkable intelligence, a sweet temper, a trusting disposition, and a heart much too affectionate for her future peace, were the chief characteristics of this girl, who was, indeed, dear as an only daughter, and a source of the purest happiness to Liliás Merivale.

Warned by the experience of her own early years, it had been Liliás's great care to surround the child, who had come into her lonely life with so strong a plea for consideration, with all the tenderness and solicitude of which her own nature held so large a store, but which had been only sparingly utilised until the closing years of her stepfather's life had drawn upon it, to her full compensation and content. To gain the child's, and keep the girl's confidence; to fill Dolores with the conviction that she was the one supreme and all-important object in her life; to make her reliance upon indulgence, her confidence in Liliás's illimitable love as spontaneous as breathing—this was the ambition of Liliás, and she had achieved a success which seldom attends human effort in any creditable direction. The line she had taken with Dolores did not meet with universal or unmixed approval; there were others besides the household at The Quinces who thought she "made too much fuss" about the girl. Of this number Mrs. Courtland was one; but she based her opinion upon more philosophical grounds.

"You are too careful to make all smooth for her in the little things of life and the small contrarieties of every day," Mrs. Courtland said to Liliás more than once; "this would be well if you could ensure a continuance of it, and if you were to be by her side always. But she will have to take her share of the lot of humanity, to be dropped in her turn into the mill, and you will either be no longer there to see the grinding, or you will have to stand by with folded hands, helpless, and see her suffer and be strong, or suffer and be weak, as nature and training shall have fashioned her; for this is what we all have to do in the case of those whom we love. Don't

bring her up too exclusively in Paradise, my dear Liliás; let her sometimes have a peep beyond the gates into the outside world, lest she be unable to bear the shock of reality when you are no longer there to break it to her, or are forced to look on while others put her through that teaching."

Liliás knew these were the words of wisdom, but she had not courage to act upon them. To her seeing, Dolores had no faults that needed correction, no wishes that ought to be denied; her sweet wilfulness was just that which she might have exercised towards her real mother, and it was therefore delightful to Liliás; lastly, if her father had been here, this would have been Hugh's way with her. And so Dolores was unconsciously, indeed blamelessly, self-occupied; for how was she to doubt her own supreme importance, or surmise that the small world in which she lived had interests other than her own, when all her experience from seven to seventeen went to convince her to the contrary, or, rather, to exclude all such ideas from her mind?

With the steadiness and constancy of her character, Liliás had adhered to her early interest in Julian Courtland, and, as he always showed her the best side of his nature, she was much attached to him. It was not altogether from policy and selfish motives that Julian exerted himself to maintain his position with Miss Merivale. He really liked and respected her, and she possessed the faculty, given to the favoured few, of bringing out the best qualities of those with whom she associated. His good looks, his pleasant ways, his high spirits, and his musical talents were charming to Liliás; that any grave faults marred this pleasing exterior she did not know. Colonel Courtland had always been careful to screen his nephew from the odium of the conduct which gave himself much pain, and kept him in constant anxiety. And Liliás was more in accord with him in regard to Julian than his wife was. Mrs. Courtland, in addition to a belief in hereditary characteristics and vices, which would in any case have made her suspicious of Julian, as the son of particularly worthless parents, was quicker of perception, more difficult of persuasion than her husband, and she differed, silently, from him on the merits of his nephew, and suffered not a little from the fear that a severe disappointment was in store for him.

Julian had always been conscious that



Mrs. Courtland distrusted him, and he disliked her accordingly; but his behaviour towards her, from the time at which he had acquired the cunning of his precocious manhood, had been faultless. He regarded her as an enemy whom he could neither dislodge nor disarm, and whom it behoved him to keep in check by giving her no possible point of advantage against him. His tactics had hitherto been so successful that there was just one subject in all the range of things on which Colonel Courtland did not value his wife's judgment, and did not depend on her sympathy. That subject was Julian.

As for Miss Merivale, the utmost she believed to the discredit of the Colonel's nephew was that he was rather extravagant. That he was a gambler, and generally unprincipled, she had not the remotest idea; nor would the Colonel, if he had been obliged to tell the truth according to his knowledge, have admitted anything like so much.

To Julian, therefore, Miss Merivale's house had been a second home, and if anything had been wanted to confirm the interest with which she had regarded the Colonel's nephew from his boyhood, it would have been supplied when Dolores came to her, and she found that it was for him that the child had fretted herself into illness after Willesden removed her from Lisle. To the pretty, foreign-looking little girl with the invalid mother, Julian had been protector and playmate, after the patronising fashion of a big boy. One of the pleasantest incidents of the ever-memorable time which delivered up Hugh's trust to her keeping, was the meeting between the child and the boy when, on Colonel Courtland's arrival at The Quinces with Julian, he recognised in Lillias's new-found treasure the little girl whose fate had given rise to so much regret.

Julian was thenceforth doubly welcome, and as Miss Merivale had educated Hugh Rosslyn's daughter at home, he had frequent opportunities of being in the company of his former little companion, when he came to London to pursue his studies for his profession. The sequel of the simple story is soon told. Julian was never dislodged from his place in the heart of Dolores. She passed from childhood into girlhood, with him for her companion still; a little more distant, just a little feared, perhaps, but ever the hero of her imagination, the idol of her heart, invested with

the glory and the grandeur of manhood while she was yet in the humility of the schoolgirl period; a being of wondrous experiences, but kind and condescending to her as ever.

About that time there came a break in the calm continuity of life at The Quinces. Lillias took her charge abroad for a year, and when they returned to England, and Julian met Dolores again, the day of kindness and condescension on his part was over. He recognised this instantly, partly with a slight shock of regret, partly with amusement, and then took up his new position with tact and readiness.

The schoolgirl had vanished as completely as the pretty, foreign-looking child, and Julian found himself regarding Miss Rosslyn from a new point of view, and wondering whether he should have admired her if he had never seen her before, and if there were not so much in common in their respective lives. On the whole, he thought he should not have pronounced her "awfully pretty". She was as nice as ever, he had no doubt; he was uncommonly glad to see her again; and he mentally paid her and his recollections of her several compliments in the peculiarly objectionable slang of these latter days; but, as for looks, she was not his "style".

Julian Courtland had travelled by this time a considerable way along the path of descent, and it would have been a hopeful sign—had there been anyone, except his evil genius, in the secrets of his vicious life, on the look-out for signs—that he was still capable of honest love for a good woman. For it was during the absence of Miss Merivale that Julian had engaged himself to Margaret Denzil, and she was in his mind when he decided that the dark-eyed Dolores was not his "style".

A less vain and more high-minded man than Julian Courtland might have been acquitted of presumption in interpreting the shy but irrepressible emotion betrayed by Dolores on her meeting with Julian as an indication that he might change the relation between them from that of friends to that of lovers. The truth was that Dolores had loved Julian all her life; she had carried his image in her heart, never supplanted, never obscured; and by her bright, innocent face, by the tone of her voice, vibrating with a timid joy, her secret—which she did not herself interpret fully—was revealed to the witnesses of the meeting, Lillias Merivale and Colonel Courtland.

Neither of the two was remarkable for worldly wisdom, and when each reflected upon their common impression, it was without a misgiving respecting Julian's sentiments. If there was a hidden hint on the part of Colonel Courtland's conscience, caused by his private conviction that his nephew was not worthy of such a girl as Dolores, he is not to be very severely blamed for ignoring it. The Colonel was one of those illogical persons who believe that the radical evil of a man's character may be uprooted by the influence of a good wife, and will lend themselves to the securing of lifelong misery to the unfortunate woman sacrificed to their theory, whenever they get a chance of reducing it to practice. Dolores was the loveliest and best girl in the world—all he could desire as a wife for Julian. Everything would be all right when he should be under the lasting influence of that dear girl, and they would be as happy as possible. Providence was indeed shaping the ends of a very rough-hewn design; the workmanship was too plain to be mistaken or ignored. This good, this excellent, this all-desirable thing was to be, and would be. Like many quiet and easy-going men, Colonel Courtland was apt, when he did make a mental exertion, to jump to a conclusion, and his sweet temper rendered him sanguine in his views.

Mrs. Courtland was not in town when Liliás and Dolores returned from their foreign tour, and the Colonel did not fully account to himself for his disinclination to impart his discovery and his hopes to his wife by letter.

"Better wait until the young people have come to an understanding, and there can be no doubt about things," said the good and honest self-deceiver to himself, as he stood before the glass in his dressing-room, arranging his white tie with scrupulous care before going down to dinner on the day after Liliás's arrival at The Quinces. Julian was to join the party at dinner, and the astute Colonel wondered whether Miss Merivale would find out anything in the course of the evening, and whether she would mention it to him if she did. Of how she would take the discovery he had no doubt.

The Colonel joined Dolores in the drawing-room, and subsiding into his special chair in his most telescopic fashion—while she sat at his feet on a footstool, not at all like a grown-up young lady who had made the grand tour according to the

very latest programme, and showed him a few of the innumerable photographs she had brought home—he slyly waited for further betrayals of the open secret, as self-congratulatory in his cunning as Tom Pinch.

Liliás; enjoying the quiet homeliness of her bright, spacious room, with its view of the velvet lawn and the great yew-trees, often longed-for amid the novelty and variety of foreign travel, and lingering there until Julian's arrival should oblige her to go to the drawing-room; was occupied with similar thoughts. To her, however, they came with more solemnity, and with a thrill of pain. A woman, however inexperienced, if she has a conscience and a heart, never fails to realise that a girl's gift of her first love is an awful deed, one which sets a gulf between the past and the future of her life, with all the joys, affections, habits, and pursuits of the former on one side of it, and on the other, "the hazard of the die". If it be cast for good, those who love the giver of that gift are indeed bound to rejoice, not only in a great positive gain, but in the escape from boundless possibilities of loss; if it be cast for ill, they are powerless to remedy or assuage the evil.

If Liliás Merivale had ever been in love, she would probably have found out earlier that the future happiness of the girl who was so dear to her was not in her keeping or governance; but she had no instinct to warn, no retrospect to guide her. There was no call in the attachment of Dolores to Julian for the self-repression that had characterised her own attachment to her so-called brother; but in every other quality the one reminded her of the other, and had seemed equally natural. Stronger love than hers for Hugh Rosslyn, Liliás humbly but rightly believed there could not be, but that it might have been different she had learned in the confidence—late, indeed, but at the last unreserved—reposed in her by her stepfather. She was of too sweet, too womanly a nature not to feel a deep and thankful gladness in the conviction that she was all to him she had prayed, hoped, and striven to be, which she had derived from Dr. Rosslyn's avowal that she herself was the ideal wife he had desired for his son, and that he had believed her heart was Hugh's. But her calm, sorrowful answer, "So it was, papa, and yours," had set the matter at rest.

The lightest stirring of a feeling that might grow into a passion, the least troubling of her quiet mind by a preference,

had never befallen Liliás Merivale in the years before Hugh's trust came to her, and after that time Dolores filled her heart and occupied her life. The comparison, "like a young widow with an only child," was exactly applicable to her.

Was it all over now? The most unselfish heart that ever beat would sink at that question, and Liliás's heart did sink when, in that little interval of quiet ensuing upon the bustle and business of her arrival at home, she put it to herself. Only to banish it, however, with the inevitable answer, and honestly to welcome the prospect of surer, higher happiness for Hugh's child.

Julian was a little late, and Liliás joined Dolores and Colonel Courtland in the drawing-room before he arrived. Dolores was still sitting on the footstool at the Colonel's feet, and still busy with the advance-guard of her army of photographs; but her animation had flagged, and her eyes turned to the tell-tale timepiece on the mantelshelf with reproachful glances.

"Julian is late," said Liliás, "but it is always excusable to be late when a man, with any business at all to do, has to dine at Hampstead."

A few minutes after the door-bell rang, and Dolores's dark eyes shone with a starry radiance which Hugh Rosslyn might have recognised.

Three months had elapsed between the return of Miss Merivale to England, and Mr. Wyndham's interpellation of Julian Courtland at the Lyceum Theatre. Three happy months Dolores would have declared them to be, if she had ever thought of them as in any wise different from other portions of time except that she was at home again, and that she saw Julian frequently, instead of merely thinking of him always. Three happy months to Liliás, taking pride in the quickly-maturing beauty, in the ripening intelligence, in the girlish graces of her beloved charge, and nothing doubting of the sun of love that was fostering them all. Three somewhat perplexing months to Colonel Courtland, who could not make out why the young people had not long ago come to an understanding, and who was, for his own part, a little uncomfortable and slightly ashamed, because, for the first, but as he strenuously resolved, also for the last time in his life, he was keeping a secret from his wife.

Three months to Julian Courtland which he would have described in strongly obnoxious language. Three months during

which he was made to receive an instalment of the wages of sin, and to feel some of the weight of the yoke under which the transgressor staggers and stumbles downhill. An incautious word had suggested to the tormentor, to whom he had delivered himself over, that there was business to be done in an unhopèd-for direction, precious ore still to be extracted from a mine supposed to have been worked out, and Julian had to pay the penalty of his incautious word. The foot of the avenger was following him up. The one good thing he possessed was about to be taken from him. The one redeeming intention of his wilful, wasted, unprincipled life—the intention of making a good girl who loved him, but had nothing but love to give him, his wife—was about to be frustrated. The most cruel of all the breaches of faith he had yet committed, because its victim was so guiltless, defenceless, and trusting, was about to be forced on him. He knew all this must be, that it was his only alternative. Ruin must have come in any case, he believed, for Julian, though a sharp young scoundrel, was not so sharp as the older scoundrel who had him in his grip, and Julian did not know that he was too valuable to Mr. Wyndham for him to ruin him after the proverbially shortsighted fashion of the slayer of the goose that laid the golden eggs. He dallied, however, pleading that it was quite too soon for him to propose to Dolores, and that he knew the old-fashioned people he had to deal with, while Mr. Wyndham did not know them. In those three months Julian had come very near to hating Dolores as fervently as he hated Mr. Wyndham; but he had been perfectly charming, and nothing was wanting to the Fool's Paradise in which they were all dwelling, except that formal declaration to which Julian now found himself pledged beyond redemption.

Meanwhile, at the very hour in which Mr. Wyndham was giving Julian Courtland a practical lesson upon the value of discretion in the selection of one's friends, an incident, destined materially to affect his future interests, had occurred at The Quincees.

### WONDERFUL WANDS.

It is sufficiently remarkable that the rod, besides being the emblem of authority, is also an instrument of the supernatural. An indispensable instrument, one may say; for was ever a magician depicted in books,

on canvas, or in the mind's eye, without a wand? Does even the most amateurish of prestidigitateurs attempt to emulate the performances of the once-famous Wizard of the North, without the aid of the magic staff? The magician, necromancer, soothsayer, or conjuror, is as useless without his wand as a Newcastle pitman is without his "dawg".

At first thought it might be supposed that the association of the rod or wand with necromancy were merely an indication of power or authority, in the same way as the sceptre is associated with kingship. But there is something more in it. Magic has been well called "the shadow of religion," and the early religious idea found expression in symbols. These symbols, as we know, have in many cases retained a certain significance long after the ideas they were meant to convey have been lost, or abandoned, or modified. If we bear these things in mind, it is not difficult to discover a religious origin for the symbolic wand of necromancy.

Mr. Moncure Conway, in his book on Demonology and Devil-lore, mentions a thing which seems peculiarly apposite to our subject. In the old town of Hanover there is a certain schoolhouse, in which, above the teacher's chair, there was originally a representation of a dove perched upon a rod—the rod in this case being meant to typify a branch. Below the dove and rod there was this inscription: "This shall lead you unto all Truth". But the dove has long since disappeared, and there remains now but the rod and the inscription. It is natural that the children of the school should apply the admonition to the rod, ignorant that it was but the supporter of a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Thus has the pious design of inculcating a Divine lesson left only an emblem of mysterious terror. In some way, too, has the magic-wand lost its religious significance and become but a dread implement of the occult.

Yet we might trace the origin of the magician's wand to the very same as that of the iron rod of the Hanover schoolhouse. We may find it in the olive-branch brought by the dove into the ark—a message of Divine love and mercy—and, therefore, a connecting-link between human needs and desires, and superhuman power. To construe a mere symbol into a realised embodiment of the virtues symbolised, were surely as easy in this case as in that of the Eucharist.

But if this suggestion of the origin

of the magician's wand be thought too hypothetical, there will be less objection to our finding it in Aaron's rod. Moses was commanded to take a rod from the chiefs of each of the twelve tribes, and to write upon each the name. The rods were then to be placed in the Tabernacle, and the owner of the one which blossomed was designated as the chosen one. The rod of the house of Levi bore the name of Aaron, and this was the only one of the twelve which blossomed. Here once more was the rod used to connect human needs with Divine will; but now a special virtue is made to appear in the rod itself. This virtue appeared again, when Pharaoh called all the sorcerers and magicians of Egypt to test their enchantments with Aaron's. All these magicians bore wands, or rods, and when they threw them on the ground they turned into serpents. Aaron's also turned into a serpent, and swallowed all the others. Now, here we find two things established. First, that even in these early days necromancy was a profession, and the rod a necessary implement of the craft; and, second, that the rod was esteemed not merely an emblem of authority, or a mere ornament of office, but as a thing of superhuman power in itself, although the power could only be evoked by the specially gifted.

We find the beginning of the idea in the story of Moses's Rod, which turned into a serpent when he cast it on the ground at the Divine command. This was what led up to the trial of skill with the Egyptian magicians, and seems to have been the first suggestion in early history of the miraculous virtues of the rod. Then we must remember that it was by the stretching forth of the rod of the prophet that all the waters of Egypt were made to turn into blood, and by which also the plagues of frogs and lice were wrought, and the hail was called down from heaven which destroyed the crops and flocks of the Egyptians. In fact, all the miracles performed in the land of Egypt were made to appear more or less as the result of the application of the magic rod, just as to this day the clever conjuror appears to produce his wonderful effects with his wand.

It was by the stretching forth of the rod of Moses that the Red Sea divided, and that the water sprang from the rock. The staff of Elisha and the spear of Joshua may also be cited in this connection, and other examples in Holy Writ may occur to the reader. We mention



them in no spirit of irreverence, but merely as evidence that the magic virtue of the rod was a fixed belief in the minds of the early writers.

We find belief in the vitalising power of the rod embalmed in many a curious mediæval legend. The budding rod, borrowed from the tradition of Aaron's, is, for instance, very frequent. Thus in the story of St. Christophoros, as preserved in Von Bulow's *Christian Legends of Germany*, we read of the godly man carrying the Child-Christ on his back through a raging torrent, and afterwards lying down on the banks of the stream, exhausted, to sleep. The staff which he had stuck in the ground, ere he lay down, had budded and blossomed before he awoke, and in the morning he found a great umbrageous tree bearing fruit, and giving shelter to hundreds of gorgeous birds. There are many such legends in the traditions of all the Christian nations, and the collection and comparison of them would be an interesting and instructive task, but one too large for our present purpose.

It is related by Holinshed, in connection with many wonderful visions which were seen in Scotland about A.D. 697, that once when the Bishop was conducting the service in the church of Camelon, with the crozier-staff in his hand, "it was kindled so with fire that by no means it could be quenched till it was burnt even to ashes". This was supposed to have been the handiwork of the devil, who has on other occasions used the staff or wand to emphasise his intentions or spite. Thus, of the famous Dr. Fian it is narrated in the "Newes from Scotland, declaring the damnable Life of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenborough in Januarie last 1591; which Doctor was Register to the Devill, that sundrie times Preached at North-Baricke Kirke to a number of notorious Witches," etc.—that he made the following, among his other confessions: "That the devill had appeared unto him in the night before, appareled all in blacke, with a white wand in his hande, and that the devill demanded of him if he would continue his faithfull service according to his first oath and promise made to that effect, whome (as hee then said) he utterly renounced to his face and said unto him in this manner. 'Avoide, avoide, Satan, for I have listened too much unto thee and by the same thou hast undone me, in respect whereof I utterly forsake thee.' To whom the devill answered,

'That once, ere thou die, thou shalt be mine,' and with that (as he sayd), the devill brake the white wand, and immediately vanished from sight." After which, the chronicle goes on to tell how the redoubtable doctor actually escaped from prison, and began to resume his Satanic practices.

This brings us to the most frequent use of the rod in superstitions—for the purposes of divination. We have a suggestion of the practice by Nebuchadnezzar, when he "stood at the parting of the way, at the head of two ways, to use divinations, he made his arrows bright," etc. He then threw up a bundle of arrows to see which way they would alight, and as they fell on the right hand he marched towards Jerusalem. Divination by the wand is also suggested in the shooting of an arrow from a window by Elisha, and by the strokes upon the ground with an arrow, by which Joash foretold the number of his victories.

Sir Thomas Browne speaks of a common "practice among us to determine doubtful matters by the opening of a book and letting fall of a staff." The "staff" business is not quite so familiar in present days, but the opening of a book for prophetic guidance is, perhaps, more common than most people suppose.

Sir Thomas Browne also speaks of a "strange kind of exploration and peculiar way of Rhabdomancy" used in mineral discoveries. That is, "with a fork of hazel, commonly called Moses his rod, which, freely held forth, will stir and play if any mine be under it. And though many there are," says the learned doctor, "who have attempted to make it good, yet until better information, we are of opinion, with Agricola, that in itself it is a fruitless exploration, strongly scenting of pagan derivation and the *virgula divina* proverbially magnified of old. The ground whereof were the magical rods in poets—that of Pallas, in Homer; that of Mercury, that charmed Argus; that of Circe, which transformed the followers of Ulysses. Too boldly usurping the name of Moses's rod, from which, notwithstanding, and that of Aaron, were probably occasioned the fables of all the rest. For that of Moses must needs be famous unto the Egyptians, and that of Aaron unto many other nations, as being preserved in the Ark until the destruction of the Temple built by Solomon."

We must confess that in our experience



of the divining-rod, we have never met with it in real life under the name of "Moses his rod," as old Sir Thomas did. We had, indeed, quite forgotten the learned physician's reference to the matter at all when we began this article, but turning, on a sudden inspiration, to his volume, we found what seemed so much in accord with the theory with which we started, that we forthwith extracted the whole passage, as above.

It is curious, however, that Sir Thomas Browne, who was so fond of delving among ancient writers, makes no reference, so far as we remember, to a striking passage in Herodotus. That historian, speaking of the Scythians, says: "They have amongst them a great number who practise the art of divination. For this purpose they use a number of willow-twigs in this manner: They bring large bundles of these together, and having untied them, dispose them one by one on the ground, each bundle at a distance from the rest. This done, they pretend to foretell the future, during which they take up the bundles separately and tie them again together."

From this we see that while the divining-rod was a familiar instrument four hundred and fifty years before Christ, it was also then disbelieved in by some. Curious to think that what the old historian of Halicarnassus was wise enough to ridicule four centuries and a half before the birth of Christ, there are yet people, nearly nineteen centuries after His advent, simple enough to accept!

Herodotus goes on to tell that this mode of divination was hereditary among the Scythians, so how many centuries earlier it may have been practised, one can hardly guess. He says that the "enarises, or effeminate men, affirm that the art of divination was taught them by the goddess Venus", a statement which will carry some significance to those who are familiar with the theories so boldly advocated by the recent author of Bible Folk-lore.

Now, the attempt to divine by means of rods, arrows, staffs, or twigs, is evidently a good deal older than Herodotus, and it is to be found among almost every race of people on the face of the earth. We say "almost", because Mr. Andrew Lang, in his book on Custom and Myth, instances this as one form of superstition which is not prevalent among savage races; or rather, to use his exact words, "is singular in its comparative lack of copious savage

analogues". The qualification seems to be necessary because there are certainly some, if not "copious" instances among savage peoples, of the use of the divining-rod in one form or other. And Mr. Lang is hardly accurate in speaking, in the same book, of the "resurrection" of this superstition in our own country. It has, in fact, never died, and there is scarcely a part of the country where a "diviner" has not tried his—or her, for it is often a woman—skill with "the twig", from time to time. These attempts have seldom been known beyond the immediate locality and the limited circle of those interested in them, and it is only of late years, since folk-lore became more of a scientific and general study, that the incidents have been seized upon and recorded by the curious. We may take it that from the time of Moses until now, the "rod" has been almost continuously used by innumerable peoples in the effort to obtain supplies of water.

In ancient times it was used, as we have seen, for a variety of other purposes; but its surviving use in our generation is to indicate the locality of hidden springs or of mineral deposits. There are cases on record, however—so recently as the last century—when the rod was used in the detection of criminals, and a modified application of it to a variety of indefinite purposes may even be traced to the planchette, which, at this very day, is seriously believed in by many persons who are ranked as "intelligent".

Now, of the use of the divining-rod in England, Mr. Thiselton-Dyer thus wrote seven years ago: "The *virgula divinatoria*, or divining-rod, is a forked branch in the form of a Y, cut off a hazel-stick, by means of which people have pretended to discover mines, springs, etc., underground. It is much employed in our mining districts for the discovery of hidden treasure. In Cornwall, for instance, the miners place much confidence in its indications, and even educated, intelligent men oftentimes rely on its supposed virtues. Bryce, in his *Mineralogia Cornubiensis*, tells us that many mines have been discovered by the rod, and quotes several, but, after a long account of the method of cutting, tying, and using it, rejects it, because Cornwall is so plentifully stored with tin and copper lodes, that some accident every week discovers to us a fresh vein, and because a grain of metal attracts the rod as strongly as a pound, for which reason it has been found to dip equally to a poor as to a rich lode." But

in Lancashire and Cumberland also, Mr. Dyer goes on to say, "the power of the divining-rod is much believed in, and also in other parts of England." The method of using it is thus described: "The small ends, being crooked, are to be held in the hands in a position flat or parallel to the horizon, and the upper part at an elevation having an angle to it of about seventy degrees. The rod must be grasped strongly and steadily, and then the operator walks over the ground. When he crosses a lode, its bending is supposed to indicate the presence thereof." Mr. Dyer's explanation of the result is simple: "The position of the hands in holding the rod is a constrained one—it is not easy to describe it; but the result is that the hands, from weariness speedily induced in the muscles, grasp the end of the twig yet more rigidly, and thus is produced the mysterious bending. The phenomena of the divining-rod and table-turning are of precisely the same character, and both are referable to an involuntary muscular action resulting from fixedness of idea. These experiments with a divining-rod are always made in a district known to be metalliferous, and the chances are, therefore, greatly in favour of its bending over or near a mineral lode."

The theory of "involuntary muscular action" is a favourite explanation, and the subject is one well worthy, as Mr. Lang indeed suggests, of the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research. But how does this theory square with the story of Linnæus, told by a writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1752? "When Linnæus was upon his voyage to Scania, hearing his secretary highly extol the virtues of his divining-rod, was willing to convince him of its insufficiency, and for that purpose concealed a purse of one hundred ducats under a ranunculus which grew up by itself in a meadow, and bid the secretary find it if he could. The wand discovered nothing, and Linnæus's mark was soon trampled down by the company who were present, so that when Linnæus went to finish the experiment by fetching the gold himself, he was utterly at a loss where to find it. The man with the wand assisted him and told him that it could not lie in the way they were going, but quite the contrary; so pursued the direction of the wand, and actually dug out the gold. Linnæus adds, that such another experiment would be sufficient to make a prose-lyte of him."

The explanation of this case by the

incredulous would, of course, be that the owner of the wand had made a private mark of his own, and thus knew better than Linnæus where the gold lay. This is probable, but we have no evidence in support of the explanation.

The divining-rod, however, is not used only in districts which are known to abound in metalliferous deposits, when minerals are being searched for, but has frequently been used by prospectors in new countries. Thus we recall that Captains Burton and Cameron in their book about the Gold Coast, tell how the rod was used by the early British explorers on the Gambia River. One Richard Jobson, in 1620, landed and searched various parts of the country, armed with mercury, nitric acid, large crucibles, and a divining-rod. He washed the sand and examined the rocks beyond the Falls of Barraconda, with small success for a long time. At last, however, he found what he declared to be "the mouth of the mine itself, and found gold in such abundance as surprised him with joy and admiration." But what part the divining-rod played in the discovery is not related, and for the rest "the mine" has disappeared as mysteriously as it was discovered. No one else has seen it, and all the gold that now comes from the Gambia River is a small quantity of dust washed from the mountain-ridges of the interior. It is curious, however, to find civilised Europeans carrying the divining-rod to one of the districts where, according to Mr. Andrew Lang, it has no analogue among the primitive savages.

We have mentioned, on the authority of Mr. Thiselton-Dyer, some of the districts of England in which the divining-rod is still more or less used. But something of its more extended use may be learned from Mr. Hilderic Friend. That writer informs us of a curious custom of the hop-pickers of Kent and Sussex for ascertaining where they shall stand to pick. One of them cuts as many slips of hazel as there are "bins" in the garden, and on these he cuts notches from one upwards. Each picker then draws a twig, and his standing is fixed by the number upon it. This is certainly an interesting instance of the divination by twigs reduced to practical ends. The same writer regards the familiar "old-wife" fortune-telling by tea-leaves as merely another variation of the old superstition. It certainly seems to have some analogy to some of the practices to which we have briefly referred,

and one finds another analogy in the Chinese custom of divining by straws.

The divining-rod of England is described by Mr. Friend much in the same way as does Mr. Dyer. But, according to Mr. Friend, hazel was not always, although it has for a long time been the favourite wood. Elder, at any rate, is strictly forbidden, as deemed incapable of exhibiting magical powers. In Wiltshire, and elsewhere, Mr. Friend knows of the magic rod having been used recently for detecting water. It must be cut at some particular time when the stars are favourable, and "in cutting it, one must face the east, so that the rod shall be one which catches the first rays of the morning sun, or, as some say, the eastern and western sun must shine through the fork of the rod, otherwise it will be good for nothing."

The same superstition prevails in China with regard to rods cut from the magic peach-tree. In Prussia, Mr. Friend says, hazel-rods are cut in spring, and when harvest comes, they are placed in crosses over the grain to keep it good for years, while in Bohemia the rod is used to cure fevers. A twig of apple-tree is, in some parts, considered as good as a hazel rod, but it must be cut by the seventh son of a seventh son. Brand records that he has known ash-twigs used, and superstitiously regarded in some parts of England; but the hazel is more generally supposed to be popular with the fairies, or whoever may be the mysterious spirits who guide the diviner's art. Hence probably the name common in some parts, of Witch-Hazel, although philologists will have it that the true derivation is Wych. In Germany, the witch-hazel is the zauber-streuch, or the magic tree, and it is probable that both witch and wych are from the Anglo-Saxon wic-en, to bend. It is curious, at any rate, that while in olden times a witch was called wicce, the mountain-ash, which, as we have seen, had supposed occult virtues, was formerly called wice. Whether this root has any connection with another name by which the magic wand is known—viz., the wishing-rod—may be doubted, but there is clearly a close connection between the hazel-twigs of superstitious England and the niebelungen-rod of Germany, which gave to its possessor power over all the world.

Of the employment of the divining-rod for the detection of criminals there are many cases on record, but the most famous in comparatively recent times is

that of Jacques Aymar, of Lyons. The full details of the doings of this remarkable person are given by Mr. Baring-Gould in his *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*; but the story as told there is too long for us to repeat. It will do to serve our purposes to quote the following condensed version by another writer: "On July 5, 1692, a vintner and his wife were found dead in the cellar of their shop at Lyons. They had been killed by blows from a hedging-knife, and their money had been stolen. The culprits could not be discovered, and a neighbour took upon him to bring to Lyons a peasant out of Dauphiné named Jacques Aymar, a man noted for his skill with the divining-rod. The Lieutenant-Criminel and the Procureur du Roi took Aymar into the cellar, furnishing him with a rod of the first wood that came to hand. According to the Procureur du Roi the rod did not move till Aymar reached the very spot where the crime had been committed. His pulse then beat, and the wand twisted rapidly. Guided by the wand, or by some internal sensation, Aymar now pursued the track of the assassins, entered the court of the Archbishop's palace, left the town by the bridge over the Rhone, and followed the right bank of the river. He reached a gardener's house, which he declared the men had entered, and some children confessed that three men—whom they described—had come into the house one Sunday morning. Aymar followed the track up the river, pointed out all the places where the men had landed, and, to make a long story short, stopped at last at the door of the prison of Beaucaille. He was admitted, looked at the prisoners, and picked out as the murderer a little hunchback, who had just been brought in for a small theft. The hunchback was taken to Lyons, and he was recognised on the way by the people at all the stages where he had stopped. At Lyons he was examined in the usual manner, and confessed that he had been an accomplice in the crime, and had guarded the door. Aymar pursued the other culprits to the coast, followed them by sea, landed where they had landed, and only desisted from his search when they crossed the frontier. As for the hunchback, he was broken on the wheel, being condemned on his own confession."

This is briefly the story of Jacques Aymar, which is authenticated by various eye-witnesses, and of which many explanations have been tendered from time to

time. Mr. Baring-Gould commits himself to no definite expression of opinion, but says: "I believe that the imagination is the principal motive force in those who use the divining-rod; but, whether it is so solely, I am unable to decide. The powers of nature are so mysterious and inscrutable, that we must be cautious in limiting them, under abnormal conditions, to the ordinary laws of experience." As, however, Jacques Aymar failed ignominiously under all the subsequent trials to which he was subjected, the most reasonable explanation of his success, with regard to the Lyons murder, is that he was by nature a clever detective, and that he was favoured by circumstances after he once caught a clue.

To return to the employment of the divining-rod in England, we find numerous instances of its application in searching for water, and these instances happen to be among the best authenticated of any on record. Not very long ago a writer in the *Times* boldly declared that he had himself seen the rod successfully used in seeking for water. He had even tried it himself, with the determination that the rod should not be allowed to twist "even if an ocean rolled under his feet". But, he confessed, that it did twist in spite of him, and that at the place was found a concealed spring! Then it is recorded of Lady Milbanke, mother of Lord Byron's wife, that she had found a well by the violent twisting of the twig held in the orthodox way in her hand—turning so violently, indeed, as almost to break her fingers. Dr. Hutton was a witness of the affair and has recorded his experience, which is quoted in a curious book called *Jacob's Rod*, published in London many years ago. This case, and others, were cited by a writer in the twenty-second volume of the *Quarterly Review*, which writer is again cited both by Mr. Baring-Gould and by Mr. Andrew Lang. De Quincey, also, asserts that he has frequently seen the divining-rod successfully used in the quest of water, and declares that "whatever science or scepticism may say, most of the tea-kettles in the vale of Wrington, North Somersetshire, are filled by Rabbdomancy." Mr. Baring-Gould also quotes the case of a friend of his own, who was personally acquainted with a Scotch lady who could detect hidden springs with the twig, which was inactive in the hands of others who tried it on the same spots.

We might cite other instances did space permit, but enough has been said to

show how the magic rod, from the earliest periods, has been an instrument of supernatural attributes, and that even to this day in our own country it is still believed by some to have the special faculty of indicating the presence of minerals and water. With regard to minerals, we confess that we have come across no instances so well authenticated as those concerning the discovery of water. With regard to these last a considerable amount of haziness still exists, and without venturing to pronounce them all fictions, or productions of the imagination, it is possible to find an explanation in a theory of hydroscopy. It is held that there are some few persons who are hydrosopes by nature—that is to say, are endowed with peculiar sensations which tell them the moment they are near water, whether it be evident or hidden—a concealed water-course or a subterranean spring. If the existence of such a faculty, however exceptional, be once established, we have at once an explanation of certain successes with the divining-rod. In the meanwhile, as hydrosopes seem shrouded in considerable doubt, it is as well to preserve an "open mind" until science and the Psychical Research Society illumine the whole subject.

#### OUR FRIEND THE ENEMY.

I so well remember that evening when the news came that war had been declared between France and Prussia. I was at Tropez, a sleepy little village some fifty miles from Paris, where for months I had been gradually sinking into that state of blissful indifference to all events not immediately present and personal, which is the characteristic effect of country air and bucolic pursuits. Still, the news startled even me, it was so perfectly unexpected. The Curé, the Maire, the Doctor, each in turn came to assure me that it was a mistake. "No; the Prussians might not have much sense, but they had just too much to be guilty of that folly. Besides, if it were true, we must, of course, have heard some rumour of it before," they declared. I did not see the force of that last argument, I confess, for I knew well that I had not looked into a newspaper for a month, and I rather suspect that my companions were very much in the same state. Still, of course, the idea of war having been declared without our knowing of it, struck us as manifestly absurd; and as we sat and chatted



that cool, pleasant evening, we smiled at the credulity of those who believed such a wild, impossible report. Now one daily Parisian paper came to Tropez, and was punctiliously read and studied—that was the *Sous-Préfet's*. We were just discussing the propriety of paying a visit to this gentleman, for the purpose of discovering whether anything had happened that could throw light on the origin of this absurd rumour, when we saw the *Sous-Préfet* himself opening the garden-gate. He was a person whom, for my part, I was prone to shun when possible, for the unique reason that he alone in the village seemed to keep up some intercourse with the outside world—to my certain knowledge he had been at least twice to Paris in nine months—then, too, when he came to see me, he would insist upon telling me the news; thus, altogether, he was a disquieting element in our community. This evening, however, he was welcome, in spite of his grave, anxious appearance; but all our little jokes died upon our lips as, like a bird of evil omen, he took his place among us.

"Well, M. le *Sous-Préfet*, what do you think of this latest invention?" asked the *Maire*, striving to speak in his usual jovial manner.

"What invention?"

"Why, that we are going to fight the Prussians."

"Going to fight!" repeated the *Sous-Préfet* scornfully. "Are fighting, you mean;" and he drew out of his pocket the *Siccle* for the day.

Yes, there it stood, clear as day: fighting had already begun. One and all we were seized with a sudden fit of patriotism; for some days there was quite a large demand for newspapers, and when we met in the street we used actually to stop and—thing unheard-of—enquire if there was any news. Then a formal notification came to the *Sous-Préfet* that we—Englishman though I am, it was always we—had gained a great victory over the Prussians; and we rang the bells and organised quite a little round of gaiety to commemorate it. In a few days came the news of another victory, then of another, and after that the whole affair seemed slightly monotonous; so we gave up reading the papers, soon forgot to buy them, and finally, having decided that we would not ring the bells any more until Berlin was taken, we dismissed the war and everything connected with it from our minds, and settled down

into our usual state of happy semi-somnolence.

It was not but that the people of Tropez were perfectly loyal and well-disposed towards their rulers, only the war appeared to be so far away, so utterly unconnected with all the things which concerned them personally, that no wonder they forgot all about it. Then, too, they were such a simple, peace-loving, easy-going people, how could anyone expect them to feel any lively sympathy with blood-thirsty pursuits? The *Sous-Préfet*, it is true, strove from time to time to awake a ray of enthusiasm, but they only listened to his harangues with a wondering smile, and decided that the poor man's liver must be out of order for him to become thus excited about trifles. Good-natured, ease-loving M. le *Maire* was a fair type of the Tropeziens, and "Live and let live" was his only code of morals. There were no signs of poverty at Tropez, crime was almost unknown, and, more important than either, there were no quarrels, for the simple reason that there was no question of politics. No man—the *Sous-Préfet* alone excepted—was a Bourbonist, a Bonapartist, or a Republican. They were all just Tropeziens and nothing more.

Some nine months before the war, worn out mentally and physically, I had come amongst these people, and had found what I so sorely needed—rest and peace. At first they had seemed stolidly indifferent to my presence; but, by degrees, perhaps moved with pity for my helplessness—in those days I was a cripple—they fell into the habit of turning into my little garden for a chat when they were passing. Sometimes they were welcome, sometimes they were not, but I knew they meant it kindly and was not ungrateful. They furnished me, too, with a never-ceasing source of amusement; there was something so unutterably sheeplike in their gentle naiveté. So completely did they upset all my preconceived notions of the French people, that sometimes, as I listened to their quaint, simple speeches, I used to amuse myself by imagining that centuries before some Northern tribe must have wandered down and settled there; and, cut off by a hill on the one side and a river on the other, had never mingled with the people around. The summer months passed swiftly by, but the news of the taking of Berlin never came to set our bells a-ringing; still, we were not impatient, we had already forgotten our anger against those Prussians



whose audacious folly had led them so far astray. Nay, in the lovely autumn evenings we used to pity them, and hope that our soldiers would remember to be merciful, as well as brave. All this time not a word—not a thought—of disaster. The Sous-Préfet seemed to become from day to day more careworn and anxious, but no one connected that with the war. One day he excited a storm of mild witticisms by suggesting that, as we were living in a time of war, we should raise a rifle-corps; not, of course, to fight, but just as a little amusement.

Oh, how the Tropeziens laughed! The Sous-Préfet, poor man, soon gave up the thought—the idea of a Tropezien fighting was too absurd.

Our own little newspaper always spoke in a vague, hazy way of glorious victories; and as for Parisian papers, it soon became strangely difficult to get hold of them. Our stationer said that the agent forgot to send them; why, he did not know; and none of us very much cared. Thus the long sunny days of September passed, and when the first frosts began to tinge the bright foliage with purple and warm brown, not a suspicion had reached our little village that all was not well.

At length, one lovely morning, I was lounging in the sunshine, watching the people whilst they arranged their autumn fruits upon the stalls in the little market-square. I was strolling about from one group to another, and chatting to each in turn, when a man, with a strange look of terror on his face, galloped up. Now the Tropeziens never gallop—a gentle trot is the utmost they ever venture on; so we knew at once that the rider was a stranger. Moved as much by pity as by curiosity, for evidently some awful sorrow had come upon the man, the people left their stalls and gathered around him. He seemed completely exhausted, and although he strove to speak, the only words we could understand were: "Les Prussiens!" This he almost shrieked, as he pointed wildly in the direction whence he had come. A murmur of pity went round, for the idea that some trouble had driven him mad was present in all our minds. I think he must have known it, for he glared at us as if in angry despair, and asked for M. le Préfet. The Préfecture was close at hand, so we led him there at once, and lingered about in the garden, for madmen were things unheard of in Tropez.

It could not have been more than five

minutes after the poor man had gone in, before the door opened and the Sous-Préfet appeared. Had he gone mad too? White as death, with chattering teeth, he stood there trying to address us; but he could not utter a word. Grief was so plainly written on his face, that a thrill of hearty sympathy passed through the crowd, and we all pressed eagerly around him, anxious to know the nature of the stranger's revelation.

"Mes amis," the Sous-Préfet began in a low, husky voice—"mes amis," he repeated, and then, covering his face with his hands, he burst into tears and sobbed aloud with uncontrollable emotion. For one moment the little crowd stood spell-bound; then the Curé and the Maire, who had just arrived, pushed their way to the front, and, without a word, led him into the house.

We were none of us very quick at grasping at the idea of danger; but as ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, half an hour passed, and we still stood waiting in that garden, I think a presentiment of evil crept over most of us. No one spoke, no one moved, but there was a feeling that things were not as they should be, and a dogged determination to know the worst was written on most faces. At length the Maire and the Curé came out on to the little iron balcony that ran around the Préfecture. The Curé was white and haggard, whilst even good-natured M. le Maire wore an air of gravity that was almost stern.

"My friends," he began, "a great misfortune has come upon us. We have been cruelly deceived. Those victories which we celebrated with ringing of bells were Prussian victories, not French; and all the news that has been sent to us is false. We have been betrayed and beaten in every engagement. The Emperor is a prisoner. Paris is surrounded, and a detachment of Prussian troops is marching in this direction."

He paused. Men, women, and children (by this time every inhabitant of the little town was listening) stood as if striving to realise the nature of this terror that was coming upon them.

"M. le Sous-Préfet has known for some time that things were going wrong, but he was forbidden to tell us. He has asked for troops for our defence, but the authorities say we must defend ourselves." One long piteous wail arose from the crowd. "We have no time for crying. In four hours the Prussians will be here, and we

have not a soldier, not a cannon. Has any-one anything to suggest?"

The question seemed almost a mockery.

"Well, then, I will tell you what M. le Curé and I have decided; and I may as well tell you, at the same time, that M. le Sous-Préfet is far from agreeing with us. Now we cannot go out and fight the Prussians, so let us go out and welcome them. Yes; I see you are surprised, but keep this clearly in your minds: the Prussians will come here in spite of all we may do, and surely it will be better for them to come as friends than as enemies. As I told you at first, a great misfortune has come upon us, and we must face it as best we can. After all, these Prussians are human beings like ourselves; now, if you agree with me, we will go out and meet them, and tell them that we have no personal ill-feeling towards them, and"—here for a moment M. le Maire hesitated, and a gleam of amusement shot over his face, which, however, he heroically suppressed—"and in the olden times when people wished to gain the goodwill of others, they used to send them gifts. Now these Prussians will be hungry and thirsty after their long march—don't you think it would be more easy and pleasant to talk to them after they have eaten and drunk? In two hours' time we will start, and let anyone who wishes to aid in this work of reconciliation bring with him fruit, cakes, wine, or any of those things by which the heart of man is made glad."

Astonishment, wonder, terror, every feeling was now swallowed up in profound admiration for the wisdom of M. le Maire. One and all they ran to collect their peace-offerings, and when, two hours later, the procession started, there was really a goodly show. At its head marched M. le Maire, in his best frock-coat, and by his side M. le Curé; after them came a motley crowd of men, women, children—nay, even babies were not lacking. Some were bearing trays covered with cakes, tarts, and rolls; others, baskets of purple grapes; one child had a few shining red apples, another a tiny bottle of wine. There were clothes-baskets full of fine white bread; wheel-barrows, neatly covered with white linen, and tastefully arranged with flowers, sweets, sticks of chocolate—in a word, the sort of array a grateful people might send out to welcome a victorious army that had delivered them from some sore danger. And all this was going to the Prussians! In all that crowd, not a creature but what

was taking his offering, and, except the Curé, not a creature who doubted as to the spirit in which his offering would be received. Truly, blessed are the simple of heart.

Before evening I saw them return, leading their conquerors in triumph. The Prussian officers and men seemed delighted with the novelty of their position, and if a shade of contempt mingled with the amusement of the former—what matter? The Tropeziens never knew it. As for the soldiers, they munched their cakes in unquestioning content, and though their hosts understood not a word of their grunted thanks, yet when a great Uhlan lifted a wearied child on to his shoulder, or gave his arm to a tottering old woman, his action spoke plainer than words.

During the month that followed there was little peace for me. To the Tropeziens German was an unknown language, and unfortunately I knew it well, and paid the penalty of my knowledge by being at once instituted interpreter-general. The German soldiers used to bring to me little complimentary sentences to be put into French, and later in the day their host, or hostess, would come to me for answers in German. Many were the intrigues I helped to build up, and dire was the confusion that resulted, whilst the blame or the praise that fell to my share was unstinted.

Still, all went on bright and smooth as a summer-day. The German officers were good-hearted fellows, and they mingled with our people as friends and brothers. They gave soirées, to which, after very little persuasion, our demoiselles went and danced; their musicians played for us; they lent their horses, and all the time overwhelmed us with expressions of goodwill.

The only breach of etiquette I heard of was in the case of a man who bent down and kissed a pretty girl as she was coming with her *bonne* from school; and for this, many and abject were the apologies that were made.

The day the Prussians left us, I took refuge from the rain in a poor, broken-down cottage. Its owner, a decrepit old woman, kept wiping her eyes furtively as she talked to me, and by degrees I drew from her that she was weeping for the Prussians.

"Ah, sir," she said in her strange patois, "you don't know how good they've been to me! Two were billeted here, and when I knew it I almost died of fright, for

what could I do with two great soldiers in the house? But the very first day they brought in a piece of beef, and although I could not understand a word of their grunts and growls, I knew they wanted it cooked. I cooked it, and put a bit of vegetable to it; and when it was ready, sir, one of those great, fierce-looking men took it and cut it into three parts, and put one part on a plate, and set a chair before it, and then began talking to me so fierce-like—at least, it sounded fierce-like to me—I nearly died of fright again. Then, as I didn't understand him, he just took me, and led me to the chair, and put a knife and fork into my hand, and I knew then that he meant me to eat the meat. And all the time they were here, no matter what they had, they would never touch a bit of it unless I would take my part too. They used to call me 'Mutter'." And the old woman sobbed again.

From all the towns around came tales of violence, outrage, and bloodshed. In Tropez alone was peace and goodwill. Who can say that M. le Maire was not wise in his generation?

## CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

### MIDDLESEX. PART I.

IN dealing with Middlesex, the last on our list of English counties, the difficulty at once suggests itself as to whether London is to be included or excepted. To deal adequately with London would require greater space than is at our disposal, but to pass it over would leave but a meagre subject for the chronicler. The difficulty is one to be rather evaded than directly met, for, like King Charles's head in the memorial, London is sure to make its way into any essay upon the history of the county, which is, in fact, little more than a dependency of the great city within its borders. Even officially, London may be said to rule over the whole county, for, since an impecunious King sold the shrievalty of the county to the citizens of London, whenever there has been a case for hanging, drawing, or quartering in any part of the county, or of levy, or replevy, or any other unpleasant process to be inflicted on Her Majesty's lieges, it is the chosen officer of the citizens of London who does execution.

But long before county and city had assumed their present relations, the Bishop, who shared with the Portreeve the secular

government of the City, held almost undisputed sway over the country round about. Whether there had ever ceased to be a Bishop in London since the first establishment of the Christian faith in Britain under the Roman sway, is a matter of some doubt. When he first comes into full historic light we find him a prelate high above the rest in power and influence, and little inferior in anything but ecclesiastical rank to the metropolitan of Canterbury. Reminders of the former territorial importance of the Church in Middlesex may be found in the prebends of St. Paul's, many of which take their titles from manors and lordships in the surrounding country beyond the city walls. So ancient are these prebendal endowments that some of their estates, situated farther afield on the Essex coast, have disappeared under the waves in the course of ages, and have left only a memory behind.

When we remember that the diocese of London is nothing else but the ancient kingdom of the East Saxons, and that this kingdom so-called, was, perhaps, in its turn, only the survival of the former Roman diocese, we may be led into speculations on the continuity of civic as well as ecclesiastical life hereabouts, which have hitherto no great authority to support them. But, anyhow, in Middlesex, the Bishop, whether by grants from pious Saxon chiefs, or in virtue of his high office, was something like a prince, and long before the Conquest he held one of the pleasantest and most fertile of the meadow tracts about London. In Fulham, to quote from Domesday, the Bishop of London had forty hides, and the buildings that clustered there, the lowly roofs, beneath which was much good cheer, opened their hospitable doors upon a fertile plain of meadows and orchards, interspersed with rich arable tracts, where the ploughman drove his team afield, secure under the sacred banner of the Church. And there is still ploughing going on at Fulham; even in this very year of grace the present writer saw a ploughman—actually a ploughman, at work with his plough and team, while all about the carcasses of unfinished houses and the rubbish of half-made roads enfold the patch of country.

Even now, when all things are changing, you may look down from the arches of the District Railway upon something like a country village. The pleasant, warm-looking, red-bricked houses are there, with their roomy gardens, with arbours and pleasure-houses, where one might still eat a pippin in summer-time with much

satisfaction. Among them rises the grey old church tower, and beyond are the tall elms that screen the Bishop's palace. Pleasant, too, was the glimpse of rural quiet, even when red omnibuses and dusty hansoms were rolling by, a glimpse beneath the porte-cochère—the square archway, so to speak—of the old-fashioned house that stood athwart the Fulham end of Putney Bridge; a house that seemed a last reminder of the old-fashioned bridges, with houses perched picturesquely over the tide, and on to which the traveller passed sometimes under a prison-gate, with, perhaps, a grizzly head or two impaled upon its spikes; sometimes beneath the groined roof of a chapel, where some favourite saint invited the wayfarer's votive offering.

But old Putney Bridge will soon be a thing of the past. It had neither antiquity nor beauty to recommend it, but still it will be missed, and the more pretentious granite arches that succeed it will be long ere they acquire such a crust of old associations. And just where crosses the primitive wooden bridge the river takes one of the most gracious aspects of its course. Above and below, for some miles, the banks are often uncomely and even gruesome to contemplate, but here, with woods, and lawns, and the noble sweep of the stream, we get a glimpse of what a grand river should be like. And that this should be such a pleasant corner we owe, no doubt, to the old Churchmen who made their home here, and dug and planted for other men's posterity.

There were swamps and marshes between Fulham and Chelsea, where there was hawking, no doubt, in the olden days, where the heron waded in the marshy streams, and where there was abundance of fowl, both great and small. Indeed, it was as the home of the fowl that Fulham, they say, first took its name, although this may be doubted, being rather too vivid an imaginative flight for the sturdy Saxon. A brook that rises on Wormwood Scrubs, and finds its way, if it can, among a network of sewers to join the Thames opposite Battersea, forms the boundary between old Fulham and Chelsea; and what a brook it is when it reaches the river in the form of a sullen tidal creek, where barges lie up on the black mud—a fitting place for Mr. Quilp to take up his abode.

There is always something to show for Chelsea in the handsome red-brick hospital for old soldiers; the plan of which kindly Nell Gwyn was the first, it is said,

to suggest to her royal lover. But is there anything left of the suburban village to which so many of the court and town resorted for fresh air? "Pray, are no fine buns sold here in our town, was it not R-r-r-rare Chelsea Buns?" writes Swift to Stella, from his little room in Chelsea. "Six shillings a week for one silly room, with confounded coarse sheets." And in May, he records the hay almost fit to be mowed. And then he rows across with fine ladies and others to hear the nightingales at Vauxhall. One night at eleven o'clock he is tempted by the ripples of the water, and went down in night-gown and slippers to swim in the river.

There is just a morsel left of old Chelsea, a fragment of High Street, with the stamp of individuality, and two rival bun-houses to keep up the traditions of the warm and saffron-flavoured bun. Old Cheyne Walk still retains its gracious outline, with the elms under which Carlyle would sometimes smoke his pipe at nights; and the comely brick church is always a landmark. But of the great people who lived here in their grand houses, only a name here and there of street or terrace recalls the memory. Lady Jane Cheyne sleeps in the church hard-by, who gave her name to the walk, where perhaps she might be met in dim brocade some starry night by one gifted with second-sight. She was of the proud Cavendish blood, daughter of the Cavalier chief who fought Tom Fairfax in the north, and she married plain Charles Cheyne, who afterwards became Viscount Newhaven. Cheyne's house had once been a royal jointure-house; and here had lived Catherine Parr for a while with her handsome Admiral, and with the Princess Elizabeth under her charge, too sprightly and frolicsome for the much-married Catherine. A few years later here lived the widowed Duchess of Northumberland, who had seen her eldest son mounting the steps of a throne only to mount still higher to the scaffold. And yet a mother of fortunate sons and daughters—of the good Earl of Warwick, of Elizabeth's favourite, Leicester, and of the mother of Philip Sidney. Long before, the old manor-house had belonged, with the adjacent lands, to the reverend abbot of Westminster; for all about Middlesex, what St. Paul had missed, St. Peter had gained—a division of territory which perhaps gave rise to the well-known adage about robbing the one to pay the other. Last of all, in this strange, eventful history,



appears Sir Hans Sloane, preserved to fame in Sloane Street and Hans Place, who came to Chelsea in his old age, with his fine collections of curios and antiquities, which at his death went to form the nucleus of the British Museum.

But here we are getting fairly into London and must retrace our steps. If we took the county according to its official divisions, we should now take a complete circuit of the City, for the Hundred of Ossulstone is simply the belt of land surrounding old London, and now comprises some of the busiest parts of the metropolis, its divisions consisting of Westminster, Kensington, Holborn, Finsbury, and the Tower. And being covered with houses, and ruled by countless local bodies, under numberless Acts of Parliament, the hundred has disappeared altogether from public view, and the sufferers from popular disturbances are puzzled enough how to enforce their legal claims against it. But, apart from these considerations, the existence of this particular hundred and its boundaries are of some interest, as showing pretty clearly that the divisions of the county, which, although popularly ascribed to Alfred the Great, are, no doubt, much earlier, were made with reference to London as a centre; that the county, in fact, was made to fit the town, the reverse being generally the case in Teutonic institutions.

It will be more convenient, however, to take the chief highways which branch out from London as a centre, beginning with the great road to the West—the Bath road as it used to be called—which may be said to start from the White Horse Cellar in Piccadilly and to end by

Famed Bolerium, cape of storms.

It is only in comparatively recent days that the western road took its outlet through Kensington and Hammersmith. Stukely says that the Roman road from Chichester crossed the Thames at Staines, where it was joined by other great roads, and passed through Brentford to Turnham Green, and over Stamford Bridge, where Stamford Brook still waters a patch of half-open common, and so by the Acton road into London. And this was the route generally followed by travellers, till the age of coaches commenced and turnpikes were in the ascendant. A fragment of the old road may be, perhaps, recognised in the Goldhawk Road, which takes its name from the extinct manor of Coldhawe, and not from the public-house sign

of The Gilded Hawk—and which starts as if it meant to be an important thoroughfare, but dies away into nothingness just about that same Stamford Brook. It was a rough and broken way, we may imagine, about Cromwell's time, when the Lord Protector, riding homewards from the west, narrowly escaped an ambush laid for him in the wilds of Shepherd's Bush.

But to follow the more modern track. We may leave Kensington, to its specialists, who discourse often pleasantly enough about the old Court suburb, although in its courtly functions it does not seem to have arrived at any great antiquity. And we may leave Hammersmith, which local pronunciation would lead one to suppose had been Emma's Mead, but which was probably Hamon's Mead, with only a glance at its convents—now all new and furbished up, but in themselves the first monastic communities established in England since the Reformation. It is said, indeed, that a community of nuns has existed at Hammersmith uninterruptedly since Roman Catholic times; being unendowed with landed property, it was overlooked or not thought worth disturbing at the dissolution of religious houses. But the familiar picture which the name of Hammersmith recalls, the graceful suspension bridge with its brown towers and its steamboat-pier in the centre—this will no more be seen by mortal eyes—its chains are gone, its towers are falling fast, and what we may see in its place Heaven only knows.

We must turn aside for a glimpse at Chiswick, with its church by the riverbank—a brand-new church, but with the old tower still standing—and surrounded by the old graveyard with its tombs of Hogarth and Louthurburg, and close by a comely old-fashioned Mall. Great stretches of high brick wall conceal the Duke of Devonshire's villa, built upon the site of a house once occupied by Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, whose intrigue with the Countess of Essex, who subsequently became his wife, formed one of those unsavoury romances which delighted the public as much then as now. Here in sullen retirement and disgrace the unhappy woman ended her days in the now loathed companionship of the man for whom she had sacrificed everything. The Earl survived his partner for many years, and was obliged to mortgage his house in order to pay his daughter's marriage-portion to her husband, Lord Russell. In the ducal villa

of modern times have often gathered the most distinguished representatives of the various worlds of arts and politics, and here by a curious coincidence died Fox and Canning, visitors only at the house of a friend; to whom death came in his turn without ceremony.

Almost as far as Turnham Green, which is the inland portion of Chiswick parish, King Charles the First had reached on his victorious march from the west, when everyone thought that he was destined to enter London in triumph and send all the Parliament folk to the Tower, and perhaps to the scaffold; when Milton, stout Puritan as he was, could only frame a sonnet to deprecate the fury of the stormers.

Lift not thy spear against the muse's bower.

But Lord Essex, with twenty-four thousand men, marched out this way, and encamped on Turnham Green, and the auspicious moment having been lost, Charles retreated slowly and reluctantly to Kingston.

Soon we reach Gunnersbury, originally Gunyldsbury, and perhaps the home of the Danish princess Gunyld, which, as Norden says in his *Speculum*, "is well scytuate for wood, ayre, and water". Gunnersbury House, now occupied by Baron Rothschild, is a fine old Jacobean mansion in origin, built by Webbe, a pupil of Inigo Jones, but a good deal altered and enlarged, with a chapel built for the use of the Princess Amelia, who at one time occupied the house. Gunnersbury Lane is still very much of a country lane, and the county round about is still a little countrified, while orchards and market-gardens dispute the ground with rows of houses, the skirmishing line of greater London.

It is not easy to write enthusiastically of Brentford—

tedious town,

For dirty streets and white-legged chickens known.

Its long dull street, where every other house almost is a tavern, seems to the pedestrian as if it would never come to an end. A wayside town, it owed its straggling length to the wayfaring traffic of the coaching age, and there are still more carriers' carts passing through than you might think, to and from the Old Bailey, while on market-nights there is a long procession of waggons all night long towards Covent Garden—waggons which return next day loaded up with manure from the London stables. The river Brent, from which the place takes its name, has some historical interest in respect of

its ford, which has often been hotly disputed for the defence of London against enemies coming from the west. To say nothing of battles with the Danes, too remote and uncertain to inspire much interest, there was a brisk engagement here between Royalists and Parliamentarians, when the latter were driven from the defences they had raised, and London, as we have just now related, seemed at the mercy of the King.

The Brent River rises a good way to the north of London in the valley between Highgate and Finchley, where a cluster of houses named Brent Street gives us a clue to the name of the river. Some British dwellings or Roman villas probably stood there, which our Saxon ancestors, with characteristic amenity, destroyed by fire, and named the place in commemoration of their exploit, Brent Street. And thus the Celtic name of the stream being lost, the newcomers called the stream, from the place it flowed from, Brent Brook or Brent River.

Isleworth was probably Thistleworth—a grand feeding-ground for donkeys, which are still reared in the neighbourhood. And now we approach the quondam heath of Hounslow, once the terror of travellers for its highwaymen, but now nearly all enclosed. To the right lies Heston, a pleasant village enough, and Osterley Park with its solid, red-brick mansion.

A somewhat dull and phlegmatic country lies before us, highly cultivated, but more fertile, perhaps, than fragrant—a country without meadows or wild-flowers; the smallest primrose-root would be ruthlessly extracted for the hawker's basket—where gangs of women, with the mud of the streets on their broken boots and patched garments, are weeding or hoeing in long lines.

Bedfont is noteworthy if only for its curious yew-trees in the churchyard, neatly trimmed into the faint presentment of two fighting-cocks—birds in which, according to tradition, the parson of the parish once took a fond delight. But after Bedfont all is blank for miles—straight road, stumpy trees, stiff hedges, deep ditches, the only eminence a distant railway-bridge—till we reach Staines, a town which is accurately described in gazetteers as neat, but which has no other attraction, except its convenience as a boating-station on the river.

Staines, anciently Stan, takes its name from the old boundary-stone of the City's

jurisdiction on the river—a stone that, if it stands in its original position, probably marks the site of the old Roman bridge over the river. The Roman name, indeed, of Staines, Pontes, would imply that there was more than one bridge. It may have been that the river then flowed in more than one channel, and was crossed by a series of bridges; but anyhow here has always been an important crossing over the river.

To explore the peninsula cut off by the highway between Brentford and Staines, we may first take a cross-country road to Ashford, less known than its bustling south-eastern rival. The first cause of Ashford, the ford over the little river—once the Esk, no doubt—varies the dulness of the way; a pretty scene, with a peaked bridge and a run of water beneath, with reeds and water-weeds, and sometimes a water-hen splashing about, and all with a background of dark firs. Ashford itself comes next, with villas and cottages about the little church, and bigger houses scattered about in the midst of lawns and gardens. Close by is a kind of wilderness, called Littleton, with gorse and thorn-bushes, and swarming with rabbits, while some fine old trees give a kind of dignity to the scene. Littleton looks interesting, and as if it had a history, but nobody seems to know anything about it.

Laleham, too, is a nice little village, on a pleasant and “fishy” looking bend of the river, where the banks are shaded with ash and willow, and rows of the inevitable elm. And here are old-fashioned red-brick houses with roomy gardens. Ponds and ducks abound, and ditches conduct the drainage of the district in a primitive way towards the river. Then there is a rambling old church, very ancient and much patched, and an enviable parsonage all covered with syringa. Happy, too, is Laleham in that it has no history of a definite character, although tradition speaks of a certain river meadow that was gained for the parish by the pious care of its inhabitants in burying a drowned person found upon its banks.

The pleasant little riverside towns of Shepperton and Sunbury have little to contribute to the general history of the county, but Hampton, with its splendid green and adjacent royal palace, seems to invite a little delay. Long was Moulsey Hurst, close by, a kind of Campus Martius, where, in the old pugilistic days of Cribb, and Spring, and the rest, many

a well-fought battle was decided within the roped enclosure. There, too, is the racecourse, once almost the only suburban racecourse of any note, and that note of rather a minor key; with little to tempt the turfite, but dear to the costermonger and sporting butcher and baker of the period. But what a wonderful change has come over the scene, with Kempton Park, and Sandown, and Croydon, with races all the year round, and thousands of pounds given away in prizes, and still more thousands won and lost over every race, while wealth and fashion crowd the stands and enclosures, and the gate-money pours in with ever-increasing stream! Assuredly, whatever else may be in decay, the turf has suffered no hard times.

This, by the way, suggested by the aspect of Moulsey Hurst; but it is needless to remark that the serious interest of Hampton is concentrated in its palace.

The quaint-looking palace, a sort of Dutch Versailles on a small scale, retains one quadrangle, which bears the marks of its first founder, Cardinal Wolsey, and with its trim lawns and flower-beds, and geometric avenues, looks, on a bright summer's day, a really going concern, which it would be easy to people with the actors of other times. It is not altogether uninhabited; soldiers mount guard at the gates; within the sunny garden-borders old ladies with their lap-dogs are wheeled about in Bath-chairs; nor are there wanting grace and beauty to brighten up the sombre old windows. It must be a kind of splendid misery to be lodged in Hampton Court, the rooms often dark and low, the kitchen a long way off from the dining-room—in the next block, perhaps; and then there are the ghosts at night. Sometimes we may fancy anterooms, and presence-chambers, and secret closets, all illumined by a spectral kind of light, as gilded coaches dash silently up, and pages and equerries throng the staircases and entrances.

At Hampton you have a glimpse of the royalty of the past, the life en plein jour of the King or Queen, when their rising and their going to bed were so many half-public performances of high interest and importance, when the gentlemen and ladies of the bedchamber actually performed the duties of their office, and royalty shivered in the cold, while noble dames disputed the right to hand over the robe de nuit. There is the royal four-poster, there the clock by which the King regulated his slumbers. With all this cumbrous etiquette his

majesty had sometimes to rise early and start upon long journeys, with hard knocks, marching, and cannonading at the end of them. There were backstair plots, too, and mutterings, and, altogether, life at Hampton Court was not a bed of roses.

But all this is long ago. Hardly one of our present dynasty has used the place as a residence, and it is with William the Third and his Queen that the chief associations of the court are connected. But always we shall remember Wolsey there, the proud Cardinal who first saw the advantages of the site, and who must have deeply regretted the sacrifice to prudence that he made in handing over the place to his royal master. Henry himself is a constant presence there, now with his cruel frown, and now with his falsely jovial air. Here came his Queens, one after the other. It was a sort of ogre's castle for them, where they might in fancy see the bleaching bones of their predecessors. Queen Bees did not care for the place; the air was too stagnant for her. But the Stuarts loved it well, the merry monarch the least of all, perhaps.

The pictures, too, that line the walls—the fine collection of portraits chiefly—require a lengthened study, and are of priceless interest to those who have become acquainted with the originals in the history of their own land. But, somehow, a hasty glance seems all that is possible at Hampton Court. You promise yourself to go again often, but you do not go. There seems a spell about the place, so that no cunningly-laid plans to reach it ever succeed. It must be visited, if at all, “promiscuously like”.

And now we come to Twickenham—le vieux Twick of the bourgeois monarch who, as Duke of Orleans, lived here so long, and gave his title to Orleans House. The house, where lately the Orleans Club held its aristocratic revels, is not without its interest. Here once came Princess Anne for country air, with that one boy of hers who, among her flock of children, alone passed safely the perils of infancy. He would have been King of England had he lived, and changed the face of history, perhaps, this young Duke of Gloucester, with his little boy regiment, instead of wooden soldiers, to march up and down the formal paths and round about the cabbage-beds.

Two notable veterans shared the rest of the century between them in this same house.

Jamie Johnstone, of Warriston, whose father had lost his head, with his patron,

Argyle, in the troubles of 1663, and who was now Secretary of State and Lord Register for Scotland, was one of them. Here he entertained Queen Caroline, George the Second's faithful consort, building an octagon room in honour of the occasion. But the good man died in 1737, just about the time of the Porteous Riots; so that Jeanie Deans could not have seen him when she made her famous visit to London. He was ninety years of age when he died, and had lived under ten sovereigns, if one may count the two Cromwells. He might have been taken in his nurse's arms to the execution of Charles the First, and lived to hob-a-nob with poor Queen Caroline—surely a life that must have been charged with strange memories.

The other veteran was a stout and florid English figure, a brave, old-fashioned Admiral, Sir George Pocock, who, after exchanging many hard knocks with the French in the Indian Seas, had the good luck to capture the Havannah, and retired to Twickenham to enjoy his laurels and his prize-money. Kempenfelt—brave Kempenfelt, who went down, with twice five hundred men, in the Royal George—was one of his captains, and another was Norfolk Jervis, who afterwards won a peerage at Camperdown. Pocock himself was a nephew of that unhappy Admiral Byng who was court-martialled and shot, “pour encourager les autres”. A notable thing, too, is it that Sir George had under his orders the gallant Thunder-bomb, and knew something about the unhappy Billie Taylor and his *ladie faire*. Pocock died when the French Revolution was in full swing, and illustrious exiles were coming in shoals to our shores.

One of the first to settle at Twickenham was Louis Philippe, a fugitive from the revolutionary army, in which he had held high command. His two younger brothers, the Duc de Montpensier and the Comte de Beaujolais, who joined him here on their release from prison, died in their sombre place of exile. But Louis Philippe lived here, at intervals, till he returned to France at the Royalist restoration. Hardly, however, had he unpacked his trunks, when he came flying back, contentedly enough, to le vieux Twick for the hundred days of Napoleon's last struggle. The house was a resort of the Orleans family till 1875, when the Duc d'Aumale finally abandoned it to the clubbites, but when Louis Philippe returned for his last exile, in 1848, he took up his abode at Claremont, which was assigned



to him by King Leopold of Belgium, who had a life-interest in the place in right of his late wife, the hapless Princess Charlotte.

More congenial, perhaps, are the memories of Pope, in his villa by the banks of silver Thames, and of Walpole at Strawberry Hill, the house still existing, but the grounds all cut up into building sites; memories that we must leave for another chapter.

## VICTIMS.

By THEO GIFT.

Author of "*Lil Lorimer*," "*An Alibi and its Price*,"  
Etc., Etc.

### CHAPTER VI. A VILLA AT WEYBRIDGE.

"VERA, don't forget that Naomi is going to have some friends this evening, and that you are to make yourself look pretty," said Leah, with something more than her usual briskness one afternoon.

They were not at the Josephs' house in Kensington. Mr. Josephs had gone off with his wife to the meeting of the British Association in Dublin, and Naomi, whose husband had taken a villa at Weybridge for the summer, had invited all the younger members of the family—Vera included—to come down to her there for the weeks of their parents' absence.

"It will be a treat to get you to myself for even so short a time, Leah, after your being away so long," the elder sister said coaxingly; "and as for your friend, I shall be delighted to have her. My babies have struck up a tremendous alliance with her; and only yesterday Alix was saying to me, 'Do ask F'ench 'ung lady to 'tay here, mummy. Her tells such nice fairly 'tories to I.' Come all of you to-morrow."

And they had done so without more ado; not being a family at all given to making difficulties, or standing on ceremony with one another, but being always prepared to give or take with equal readiness.

To Vera, indeed, the overflowing heartiness and jollity, the keen banter and family jokes, the freedom from all constraint, and absolute confidence which reigned in both households, was a perpetual and never flagging wonder, the effect of which, however, was to make her at first even more shy and retiring—with Leah as well as the others—than she had ever been before.

"But you see it is all so new and different to me," she had said plaintively once when the latter expostulated with her. "Even you yourself, Leah. Not that you

are less nice to me than you were. Indeed, I think that in some ways you seem nicer than ever, but at St. Tryphine your niceness all appeared to belong to me, to be for me, and no one else; just as you were not like anyone else, but a beautiful fairy come down into my world to make it bright for me; while here you belong to your parents, and brothers, and sisters, and a lot of other people, and they belong to you, and are all a little like you, and you like them, and it is I who have come into your world—the fairyland world—only, instead of being a brightness, I am a dull little patch there as a mortal should be," and Vera laughed a trifle sadly.

Leah laughed too, putting her arms round the girl as she did so.

"Why, Vera, what a fanciful little flatterer you are! And such poetical fancies, too! But, do you know, you are not really flattering me, after all, when you show me that you made me more at home with you in Brittany than we are doing with you here. Why should you call yourself a dull little patch? You are not so to us, and you would not feel so yourself if you would be only less shy, and would talk and enjoy yourself, instead of hiding away in corners and peeping out with your great, solemn eyes like a white mouse in a cage of magpies. Mother said only the other day that she was afraid you were not happy here."

"Oh, but I am; and I did not mean 'dull' in that sense," cried Vera eagerly. "That is just what I enjoy, looking at and listening to you all, and keeping quiet myself. It is just like a play to me with a lot of scenes, or a long gallery of pictures; only they are all pleasant pictures and scenes, and I never get tired of them as I might of real ones. Please, please tell your mother so, dear Leah, or perhaps she will think I am ungrateful, and will want to send me away."

"Here she is, so you had better tell her yourself. She is such a sceptical old woman she mightn't believe me," said Leah gaily; but, indeed, both she and the others soon found out that Vera's shyness and silence did not mean unhappiness, and that the only thing which really distressed her was to be forced out of it, and made to come into the foreground, and mingle with the talk and chaff of the lively young people about her.

Her great delight on the other hand was, as Naomi said, to get hold of that lady's three younger children, and pet and

play with them by the hour together; a fancy of which those young Turks soon became aware, and which they turned to account by riding roughshod over her in every sense of the word, galloping to Banbury Cross on her foot, trapping her between four chairs as a bear, chasing her along the garden walks as a rabbit, riding triumphantly on her back with the thick, plaited tail of her hair clutched in their little hands to hold on by, or cuddled down in her lap to be sung to, with a luxurious pleasure which was more than reciprocated by the lonely little girl, who had never lived in a house with little children in it before, and thought each of their words and ways more charming than the last.

For their parents she had much less admiration. Naomi, it is true, was not unlike Leah in many ways; and was a very pretty, sensible young woman, overflowing with good nature to everyone, and prepared to feel special kindness towards anyone who had the good taste to admire her children; but she had not her sister's advantages either in the way of natural talent or education, and having had to deal with the rougher and more prosaic side of life in her early youth, had in these later days of prosperity taken more ardently to the creature-comforts of life than is perhaps consistent with a high degree of refinement or intellectual culture. And creature-comforts, combined with a healthy capacity for enjoying them to the utmost, have a tendency to make the female figure spread, to double the classic chin, and bring an undue floridness to the cheeks. Naomi did not like getting fat. She had had a particularly small waist in the days of her girlhood, and that portion of her she managed to retain of very medium size by dint of rigorous lacing; but the result, as regards the line of beauty, was hardly perhaps as successful as might have been desired; and her mother had remonstrated more than once on the process.

"Better let yourself go, dear," she said kindly. "It can't be healthy to take yourself in so much; and I'm sure it is that which sends the blood to your face." But Naomi was unpersuadable.

"My dearest mother, I should be a porpoise! How very brutal of you! And my waist is only just decent as it is. If I were to let it get a bit bigger, Lucas would be so disgusted with me he'd go off with some other young woman. Don't you think he would, Miss St. Laurent? I know he admires you."

Vera thought Mrs. Lucas vulgar, and wondered she could be Leah's sister, or that Mrs. Josephs should seem equally fond and proud of both her daughters. She did not at all understand it when the tender-hearted mother would say, with tears in her eyes, after a visit from her eldest girl:

"Ah, no one knows what Naomi is to me, who didn't see her in the days when she and I had to fight through our worst troubles together. That child! I can see her now, a wee thing of seven, toasting her father's bread, or staggering up and down the room with baby Leah in her arms so as to set me free to see to the other house duties. And when she was bigger, the times and times she's gone to school with only a bit of dry bread in her satchel that there might be more butter left for the little ones, or pretended not to care about milk in her coffee at breakfast! The Lord bless my girl! 'Tis a righteous reward that she should enjoy her life now."

Neither did Vera return Mr. Lucas's admiration; though her indifference to men—a peculiarity which even Leah could not help remarking wonderingly—made her less keen to detect the special faults in him.

After all they were not very heinous ones; for it certainly could not be put down as a fault, of malice on his part that Mr. Lucas only stood five foot nothing in his boots, and that the little legs terminating in the said boots were so thin and curved as to suggest his having been a weakly babe set down to toddle too early in life; nor that his nose was unduly large, and his chin disproportionately small for the rest of his features; while his conversation dealt so exclusively with sale and barter, with rise in this and fall in that, that Vera, who, like most girls, thought nothing so uninteresting as money matters, quite sympathised with Mr. Josephs when he used to say:

"Naomi's good man is coming to tea? Then bring me mine into my study, one of you. I've got a delicate experiment to make this evening, and if the word 'city' once gets into my brain there's no more hope for science in it."

To do him justice, however, Mr. Lucas never wilfully obtruded his own special topic on his father-in-law, for whom, as for all his wife's family, he entertained the warmest respect and admiration. He was a City man, of course, and a City man, "pur et simple," understanding nothing so well as the making of money, succeeding very well in the manufacture, and enjoying it hugely when made. But

more even than money—or the making of it—did Mr. Lucas worship his wife and adore his children; nor did the assiduity of his grubblings in the City show itself, as with many Christians, in stinginess at home and close-fistedness generally. He was really an excellent young man, generous to his family, charitable to the poor—the Jewish poor, “bien entendu”—a regular attendant at the synagogue, keeping all the fasts and feasts of the law with the greatest regularity, and being far more orthodox generally than the men of the Josephs family. Also, utterly prosaic and commonplace as he might be, he had a weakness, or, rather, a passion, a romance of his very own, so delicious, all-absorbing, and consolatory, that, even though “shirtings had fallen again” and “blue winseys were a drug in the market”, he could still find peace and joy during those months of the year when the seasons permitted him to devote part at any rate of his evenings to the enjoyment of it. I allude to that sport which an ill-natured person has somewhat flippantly described as “a hook at one end of a line and a fool at the other.”

It was for the indulgence of this pastime that Mr. Lucas had gone to the expense of the Weybridge villa; though it is not to be denied that he got it cheaper than anyone else could have done, its owner being in his debt and glad to economise abroad for a time; and anyone who had seen him emerge from the station of an evening and hurry home, smug and City-like, in his tightly-fitting frock-coat, top hat, and patent leather boots, to sally forth again a few minutes later, clad in a shabby and worn-out suit of checked flannel, a cap of the same material on his head, with ear-flaps tied down under his chin, a disreputable old fish-basket in one hand and a bundle of rods, etc., in the other, would hardly have known him for the same person. This, however, was Mr. Lucas in his highest and happiest moments, just as the subsequent hours, which he passed, silent, motionless, and almost breathless, on a cane chair in a punt moored about half a mile down the river, were those of the purest and most unalloyed enjoyment he ever experienced. So well this was understood, indeed, by the whole family, that his eldest boy and the two young Josephs looked on the privilege of a seat in the punt, and a miniature rod of their own, as something akin to the “golden bar of heaven”; while his wife, though delighting in nothing so much as the society of her neighbours on

these summer afternoons, would have given up every engagement in the world rather than not be at home when her Albert came back from town, so as to see that his rods and other paraphernalia were ready in the hall, and give him a cup of tea and a kiss before he departed to his beloved punt, and she to some river picnic or afternoon tennis-party; at which latter, though she did not play herself, she could sit in the shade chatting to other matron friends, and think how much more gracefully Leah played than the other girls, and how much prettier, sharper, and better behaved her children were than the children of any other lady present.

Vera did not play tennis. In the first place she did not know the game, and in the next she was too shy to learn it; on hearing which, Mr. Lucas was cruel enough to propose that she should come in the punt with him and fish, and Naomi declared it was the greatest honour he had shown any girl of her acquaintance.

“He won’t have me. He says I can’t do without talking and frightening the fish; and it’s true—I really can’t. I should scream if I wasn’t allowed to say something once in five minutes,” she said candidly; and even Leah observed:

“I hope you won’t mind it, dear. You needn’t go again if it’s stupid; but I do think Albert wants to be kind, and show you attention.”

Poor Vera had not courage to resist, and went like a martyr offering no further protest than a feeble:

“But I don’t know how to fish!”

“Oh, you will soon learn,” said Mr. Lucas benevolently; “it comes of itself to those who have a taste for it, and I am sure you have. I see you like being quiet, and this is quiet and excitement, too—the perfection of both. See here; take hold of your rod—so, and just play the line gently. We mustn’t talk, you know—it would never do to disturb the fish—and, when you feel a bite, turn your wrist quickly, and—Of course, though, if it is a very heavy fellow—”

But perhaps this recommendation was needless. Indeed, Mr. Lucas was not often called upon to struggle with a “heavy fellow” himself, and Vera certainly never felt a bite at all. She sat like a statue, the picture of meek docility, for three hours, never opening her lips or stirring; and only revealed the depths of her misery to Leah by the piteous enquiry, after their return home:

“Do you think I need ever go again,

Leah? Of course, I must, if you say so; but do you think I need?"

Leah made haste to assure her to the contrary.

"My dearest child, how often must I tell you that you never need do anything you don't like here? All we want—now that your father is better—is for you to enjoy yourself and be happy."

On the present occasion, Vera did not look as if the idea of an evening entertainment was enjoyment, for she faced round from where she was sitting, screwed up on the lower step of an iron staircase leading down from the drawing-room to the villa-garden, and said, rather apprehensively:

"Do you mean a party, Leah?"

"Oh dear no! But Naomi has found out that the Salomons are at Shepperton, and she asked them to row up this evening, and have supper and some music with us; and the Werthers, from next door, and two gentlemen, old friends of ours"—Leah's colour deepened suddenly in her cheeks—"are coming too."

"Friends I have met already?" asked Vera, not noticing.

"No; I don't think so—not one of them, at any rate. He (his name is Dr. Marstland)," Leah's colour was certainly wonderfully beautiful that afternoon, and she seemed to feel it herself, for she turned her face aside, so as to face the fresh breeze, "had left town before we returned from Brittany. He has taken a house-boat on the river for the summer holidays, and it was only by chance he found out we were here. His friend is a Mr. Burt—John Burt, the water-colour artist. Don't you remember our meeting his wife and her sister one day at the Exhibition, and her saying they were just off to Switzerland? Well, they didn't go, because the sister was taken ill with the measles, and he is staying with George Marstland on board the house-boat instead."

"Well, it will be like a party to me," said Vera; "and then there was that garden one yesterday. I wonder—Leah, do you think mamma would call it being too gay?"

"Gay! My dear, of course not."

"But you know what she said when you spoke of it not being the season now, and of how quiet you were."

"Yes; but, my dear Vera, that was only because of the danger your father was then

in. You did not know of it, because M<sup>de</sup>m<sup>e</sup>. St. Laurent did not wish to frighten you; but I dare say she felt that if you did know, you would not care to be going out much, or enjoying yourself. However, that is all past now, for he is much better; even the fear of a relapse over. Didn't your mother say so in her last letter?"

"Yes," said Vera. "Well, Leah, you know best, and if mamma only meant that—" She paused a moment, and then added somewhat irrelevantly: "I remember Mrs. Burt, a rather melancholy-looking person, dressed in a funny way, something like the saints in stained-glass windows. She asked me if I knew St. Matthias's in West Brompton, and told me how beautiful the Whitsuntide decorations there had been; so I supposed she was a Christian."

"Oh yes; the Burts are very decidedly Christian, and very High Church people—almost Roman Catholics. Indeed, when Mr. Burt is on the Continent (by the way, he is very fond of Brittany; I must introduce him to you), I believe he goes to mass as regularly as any of the peasants."

"Does he, really?" said Vera, looking shocked; then: "And Dr. Marstland—is he a Christian, too? Somehow, the name doesn't sound Jewish."

"Yes." Leah's tone had grown suddenly grave, almost sad; but the next moment she smiled, and added: "I know what is in your mind, Vera, but you are safe enough this time. Dr. Marstland is as good a Christian and Protestant as your mother. You may make friends with him safely, and you will. He is a man everyone likes."

"Do you like him, Leah? I have more faith in you than 'everybody'."

"I?" Leah hesitated an instant, but added almost immediately and with extra distinctness: "Yes, I like him exceedingly; but we have known him a long time, Naomi and I. He used to attend father's chemistry class, and study botany privately with him as well, before he took his degree. Father is very fond of him. Well, don't be late in dressing, Vera. I will go and cut some flowers for your hair," and she ran off humming a tune as she went.

It was that of the little French song she had taught Vera.

"Que tout le monde soit gai, chérie!" and Vera thought that her voice had never sounded sweeter.

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